

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 22 were presented for examination in the present application. The instant amendment cancels claims 11, 21 and 22 without prejudice and adds new claims 23 – 25. Thus, claims 1 – 10, 12 – 20 and 23 – 25 are presented for consideration upon entry of the instant amendment.

The drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R 1.84(p)(4) for using reference characters “22”, “20”, and “16” to designate heating plate, fluid reservoir, and housing of both the first and second embodiments. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraph of 37 C.F.R 1.84(p)(4) that forms the basis for this objection:

The same part of an invention appearing in more than one view of the drawing must always be designated by the same reference character, and the same reference character must never be used to designate different parts.

FIGS. 2 and 3 illustrate a first embodiment of the controller operatively connected with a fabric grooming device. Reference characters “22”, “20”, and “16” designate a heating plate, a fluid reservoir, and housing, respectively. FIGS. 8 and 9 illustrate a second embodiment of the controller operatively connected with a fabric grooming device wherein reference characters “122”, “120”, and “116” designate a heating plate, a fluid reservoir, and housing, respectively.

The illustrations in FIGS. 2 and 3 and the illustrations in FIGS. 8 and 9 are not different views of the invention but rather, they are different embodiments. Therefore, the drawings are in compliance with 37 C.F.R 1.84(p)(4) and are in condition for allowance. A different subset of reference characters are used to designate features of

the first and second embodiments, not of different views of the drawing. For these reasons, applicants respectfully request that the objection to the drawings be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The disclosure was objected to because of an informality identified by the Examiner on page 17, line 10, where "Fig. 7" should purportedly read –Fig. 6–. Applicants respectfully maintain that "Fig. 7" is the appropriate description of the figure at issue, which illustrates an embodiment of the controller generally represented by reference numeral 100. "Fig. 6" refers to a logic diagram of operational steps associated with the controller. Thus, applicants respectfully request that the objections to the disclosure be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The rejection to claim 11 brought under 35 U.S.C §112, first paragraph, has been rendered moot by cancellation of this claim in the instant amendment. Therefore, applicants respectfully request that the rejection to claim 11 brought under 35 U.S.C §112, first paragraph be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1 – 3, 6 – 8, 10 – 13, 15, 16 and 18 – 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Wellcome (United Kingdom Patent Application No. GB2163574A).

Claims 11, 21 and 22 have been canceled by this amendment, thereby obviating the rejection brought under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for these particular claims.

Independent claim 1 of the present invention now provides, "wherein said interface is integrated onto said fabric grooming device." Claim 1 recites a controller for use with a fabric grooming device comprising an interactive user interface with one or more input selectors and one or more output indicators. The interface is operatively connected to a microprocessor; and the interface is integrated onto the fabric grooming device.

Wellcome discloses a control box that accommodates electronic components for controlling the working components of an iron. The box is provided with a user-operable control and display panel for controlling the operation of the iron. The control box, or user interface, is not integrated onto the iron as it is in the present invention. Instead, it is interposed at any suitable location along an electrical lead. The control box may be arranged to stand on, or clip onto an ironing board. Alternatively, the box may stand on a table-top or on the floor.

Present claim 1 differs from Wellcome in that claim 1 recites an interactive user interface that is integrated onto the fabric grooming device. In contrast, Wellcome discloses a user interface interposed at any suitable location along an electric lead. Thus, Wellcome does not anticipate claim 1. Claim 1 of the present invention is patentably distinct and distinguishable from Wellcome.

Therefore, applicants respectfully request that the rejection brought under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) be reconsidered and withdrawn with respect to claim 1.

Claims 2, 3, 6 – 8, 10, 12, 13, 15 and 16 depend from the aforementioned claim 1. Thus, they are believed to be in condition for allowance. Furthermore, claims 2, 3, 7, 10, 13, 15 and 16 each add limitations to the present invention that make it patentably distinct from Wellcome. Particularly, claims 2 and 7 disclose input selectors and output indicators, respectively, that have “an image or symbol associated therewith for identifying the function and/or operation corresponding thereto.” Claim 3 discloses that “at least one of said one or more input selectors is a touch screen panel.” Claim 10 discloses that “at least one of said one or more output indicators is an LED panel.” Claim 13 discloses that “output indicators are an audible indicator.” Claim 15 discloses a microprocessor that “is operatively connected to a sound generator, one or more sensors, and/or a heater.” Claim 16 discloses that a “microprocessor is also operatively connected to a timer.” None of the aforementioned limitations are present in Wellcome and thus, for these reasons alone, are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal are requested.

Independent claims 18 – 20 now provide, “wherein said interface is integrated onto said fabric grooming device.” Claims 18 – 20 also each provide a fabric grooming device wherein the user interface is integrated directly onto the device. As previously discussed, Wellcome discloses a control box that is provided with a user-operable control and display panel for controlling the operation of an iron. The control box is not integrated onto the iron as it is in the present invention but instead, it is interposed at any suitable location along an electrical lead. Wellcome does not anticipate the

limitations that have been added to independent claims 18 – 20. Claims 18 – 20 of the present invention are patentably distinct and distinguishable from Wellcome.

Therefore, applicants respectfully request that the rejection brought under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) be reconsidered and withdrawn with respect to claims 18 – 20.

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Wellcome (United Kingdom Patent Application No. GB2163574A) in view of Aoto et al. (Japanese Patent No. JP 03159699).

Dependent claim 5 recites the feature that “at least one of said one or more input selectors is an LED panel.” In the claimed present invention, the input selector itself is in the form of an LED touch-panel as defined in the specification on page 5, lines 17 – 18.

Wellcome has been described above. Aoto discloses at page 1 an LED that is lit and displayed when a temperature setting switch is selected (English Constitution translation). Aoto is cited in the Office Action for teaching the concept of an iron with temperature setting switches being selected, then an LED according to it being lit and displayed as set. See Office Action at page 6, paragraph 11. The motivation for combining the teachings of Wellcome and Aoto is cited as “provid[ing] the user with an easy mechanism to set and view the temperature selection, thereby providing a more efficient use interface for an iron” as compared with the control panel of Wellcome.

However, applicants respectfully submit that claim 5 is not rendered obvious by the combination of the Wellcome and Aoto references. Aoto does not disclose the application of an LED touch-panel that is an input selector as it is in the present invention. In contrast, Aoto discloses an LED light that corresponds to an output indicator that is illuminated when adjustments are made to the setting of a temperature switch. As noted in the Office Action, Wellcome does not disclose the application of “at least one of said one or more input selectors as an LED panel” (as recited in claim 5); and the additional teaching of Aoto (above) does not address this deficiency. It would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art, nor would there have been motivation to combine the teachings of these two references to create the present invention as recited in claim 5. Thus, claim 5 is not rendered obvious over Wellcome in view of Aoto. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection brought under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) to claim 5 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Wellcome (United Kingdom Patent Application No. GB2163574A) in view of Upadhye et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0074903).

Dependent claim 4 recites that “at least one of said one or more input selectors is an LCD panel.” In the claimed present invention, the input selector itself is in the form of an LCD touch-panel, as defined in the specification on page 5, lines 17 – 18. The LCD touch-panel is suitable for displaying segmented text (See page 9, lines 18 – 22 or scrolling text (See page 12, lines 5 – 10).

Wellcome has been described above. Upadhye is cited in the Office Action for teaching an input device comprising input selectors being displayed in an LCD depending on the temperature selection. See Office Action at page 7, paragraph 12. The motivation for combining the teachings of Wellcome and Upadhye is cited as providing the user with “a lower power consumption device and a higher resolution in the device allowing for a smaller but comfortable display, thereby providing a quality product interaction experience,” as compared with the control panel of Wellcome.

However, applicants respectfully submit that claim 4 is not rendered obvious by the combination of the Wellcome and Upadhye references. Upadhye does not disclose the application of an LCD touch-panel that is an input selector as it is in the present invention. Furthermore, an LCD panel such as the one disclosed in Upadhye, when combined with the Wellcome device, would make the Wellcome reference more cumbersome, more expensive and potentially inoperable because the LCD disclosed in Upadhye has no place to fit into the control panel of the Wellcome device. One of ordinary skill in the art would not make such a modification. As noted in the Office Action, Wellcome does not disclose the application of “at least one of said one or more input selectors as an LCD panel” (as recited in Claim 4); and the additional teaching of Upadhye (above) does not address this deficiency. It would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art, nor would there have been motivation to combine the teachings of these two references to create the present invention as recited in claim 4. Thus, claim 4 is not rendered obvious over Wellcome in view of Upadhye. Applicants

therefore respectfully request that the rejection brought under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) to claim 4 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 14 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Wellcome (United Kingdom Patent Application No. GB2163574A) in view of Riess et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,509,555).

Dependent claim 14 recites that "said one or more output indicators are a tactile indicator." Dependent claim 17 recites that "said microprocessor is operatively connected to a vibrator." The tactile output indicator may be provided by a motor driven eccentric and is preferably suitable to generate a steady, patterned and/or variable signal for any length of time and/or in any combination desired for an intended object.

Wellcome has been described above. Riess discloses at column 23, lines 52 – 58, a tactile signaling device that alerts a user when a bond has been formed. Riess is cited in the Office Action for teaching a hand held heater comprising a microprocessor operatively connected to a tactile feedback solenoid. Wellcome further teaches the tactile output being a motor vibration or a solenoid actuation. See Office Action at page 8, paragraph 13. The motivation for combining the teachings of Wellcome and Riess is cited as alerting the user of "a successful operation of the device, thereby improving the user interface of the device to ensure system notification to the user," as compared with the control panel of Wellcome.

However, applicants respectfully submit that claims 14 and 17 are not rendered obvious by the combination of the Wellcome and Riess. A tactile indicator such as the one disclosed in Riess, when combined with the Wellcome device, would make the Wellcome device more cumbersome, more expensive, inconvenient and inefficient because the control box is not integrated onto the device. In contrast, the control box is interposed at any suitable location along an electrical lead. Thus, a user of the Wellcome device would not be able to feel any vibrations of a tactile indicator, thereby defeating its intended purpose. As noted in the Office Action, Wellcome does not disclose the application of "said one or more output indicators are a tactile indicator" (as recited in claim 14) or of "said microprocessor is operatively connected to a vibrator" (as recited in claim 17); and the additional teaching of Riess (above) does not address this deficiency. It would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art, nor would there have been motivation to combine the teachings of these two references to create the present invention as recited in claims 14 and 17. Thus, claims 14 and 17 are not rendered obvious over Wellcome in view of Riess. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection brought under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) to claims 14 and 17 be reconsidered and withdrawn.


Claims 23 – 25 have been added to point out various aspects of the present application. It is submitted that new claims 23 – 25 are directed to the elected embodiment. Support for new claims 23 – 25 can be found in the specification at page 18, lines 4 – 6. It is believed that new claims 23 – 25 are in a condition for allowance.

In view of the above, applicants respectfully submit that the claims in this application are patentably distinct over the cited prior art and the cited combinations of same. Applicants therefore respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all objections and rejections, and passage of this application to allowance.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicants' attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

November 13, 2006


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